Plea for Calmness

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JAMNALALJI

" The angel
Came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Sheth Jaman's name led all the rest."

Those who knew Jamnalalji — and the hundreds of telegrams that have been pouring in from places far and near show that the number of that blessed company was great — will not feel unhappy over the alteration I have made in Leigh Hunt's famous lines about Abou Ben Adhem. I do not know if on the fateful afternoon of the 11th Jamnalalji had a vision of any Angel come to receive him in the region of the blessed. But if he had, I am sure he must have spoken to him:

" Low but cheerly still; and said,
I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellowmen."

* * *

Never since the sudden and premature death of Maganlal Gandhi in 1928 had any bereavement dealt such a staggering blow on Gandhiji as the sudden and premature death of Jamnalalji. Words fail me when I attempt to describe his feeling of desolation. For two days he bore up bravely consoling the bereaved widow and the aged mother, but on the third day he broke down as he was saying: " Childless people adopt sons. But Jamnalalji adopted me as father. He should have been an heir to my all. Instead he has left me an heir to his all." The feeling of desolation is, if I may say so, universal. Wardha and Sevagram, even with Bapu and Ba in it, look dreary without Jamnalalji. The numerous institutions he had founded or helped in founding will experience a piercing sense of void without his sunny presence. Even the meetings of the Congress Working Committee must be dull and dreary without his scintillating and outspoken commonsense.

* * *

The feeling of loneliness that has come over most of us may be judged from these few lines from Vallabhbhai's letter:

" He had vowed not to sit in a train or a motor car, and his vow was to terminate on the 15th. He had promised thereafter to come and have rest with me in Hajira. Instead he has gone to his eternal rest. No death could have been better. But as the proverb goes, 'Let a hundred die, but not the nourisher of a hundred.' Hundreds upon hundreds of our workers in various parts of our country must be shedding silent tears in their cottages. Bapu has lost a true son; Jankidevi and the family a true shelter; the country a loyal servant; the Congress a stately pillar; the cow her true friend and many institutions their patron; and we have lost a beloved blood brother. I feel so desolate and forlorn."

* * *

Everyone mourns his loss. Amongst the mourners are not only his friends of the Working Committee, not only his friends in the business world like the Birlas and the Tatas, Sir Purushottamdas and others, not only his numerous co-workers the humblest of whom he had brothered and befriended, but countless others who received his help without the world ever knowing it. The meeting to mourn his death held in Wardha was addressed by members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, and a Muslim barrister paid him a fine tribute. He said without Jamnalalji's sympathy and timely help the Anglo-Urdu School would not have been in existence. He had the priceless gift of friendship which endeared him to all, and everyone under his roof felt completely at home. He had literally broken the barriers of the family of his blood relationship, and made himself member of a vaster family to which men and women of all races and creeds belonged. Above all he had broken the barrier that wealth and position often create. His employees and his servants were members of his family, and they shared their joys and sorrows with him in an unstinted measure. There are few wealthy men on earth so utterly void of affectation and snobbery, so utterly innocent of possession and propriety (I mean ownership), so utterly free from communalism or provincialism, and so overflowing with the milk of human kindness.

* * *

Like some of those rare men who are gifted with the power of sublimating their desires and their passions, he was gifted with the power to sublimate his sense of possession. He followed the master cheerfully through all the numerous vicissitudes of the latter's life, because although 'he had great possessions', he had divested himself of the sense of proprietorship in them. Born of an obscure family in a waterless village in Jaipur State, he was adopted by a rich man from the same State who had settled in Wardha. Even the poor parents would not part with their child, until the rich Bachhrajji from Wardha promised to dig a well in the village. The boy was brought up by the adoptive father, and after two or three years in a Hindi school was put into business. Once he incurred

the rage of this hot-tempered father who reminded him of the riches he had come into possession of without labouring for them. He was just 17 then. He addressed a letter to the father couched in terms of humility and firmness characteristic of the Jamnalalji of future years. The letter is in Marwadi, and some of the idiom of the language is untranslatable. But the substance may be given here :

"You were so angry with me today. It was God's will, and you had a right to be angry in that you have adopted me. It is not your fault, rather is it the fault of those who gave me in adoption. The money is yours, and you may do whatever you like with it. I am sorry for the expenses you have incurred on me so far, but from this moment I will not touch a pie out of your money. I have no right against you, and I would implore you not to be anxious about me. May God keep you for many more years. Wherever I go I shall pray for your welfare. Pray pardon me for having irritated you. I hope you never believed that I served you because of your money. Please dismiss that thought from your mind, if you ever had it. I care not for wealth, I pray that I may never forget the name of God who alone can keep me happy in this and in the next life. And pray be of good cheer and don't sorrow over my going. All earthly relationship is hollow. The worldly possessions hold you in their grip. Thank God you have freed me today from their deadly grip. And please rest assured that I will not go to law to claim a pie of what is yours. This is a regular release-deed on a stamped paper, and it declares that you owe me no obligation whatsoever. I owe no debts that you need repay. Use your money in charity, swear not at sadhus and others, as is your wont, but please them with whatever money you can give. I am taking nothing from the house — nothing but the clothes that cover me."

* * *

The father relented, implored the son tearfully to stay, and he stayed. Sturdy commonsense and innate business skill enabled him to earn lakhs and give in charity five times the wealth he had inherited from the adoptive father. If he stayed home in response to the father's mportunations, he knew he was a trustee of the father's wealth. Consciously or unconsciously that was his first lesson in the theory of trusteeship. The father who had adopted him taught that first lesson, the father *he* later adopted initiated him into the deep implications of it.

Similarly he had the virtue of fearlessness which the absence of a slavish education had left unimpaired. He had silenced Tommies travelling first and second and trying to bully him; he would not serve wines at a party he gave in honour of a Governor; to a Commissioner who said that the Chief Commissioner would not open his school unless he promised to be more loyal, he had said he would do without that costly privilege, and to a D. S. P. whom he was interviewing and who had remarked: "How I wish the boat that is carrying Tilak to England may go to the bottom of the sea," he had said: "You forget that there are numerous Englishmen on the boat!"

This fearlessness came into full play during the twenty years of his public life under Gandhiji's leadership. President Kruger was unlettered and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek knows no English. Ignorance of English was no handicap to them. It had in fact left the native vigour of their minds unspoilt. Even so with Jamnalalji. He could see the implications of an intricately worded Congress resolution quicker than many other members, and he would often raise his warning voice lest the Committee should put their foot into seemingly innocent propositions. It was he who raised earliest the question of moral and material co-operation in the war and who said that a nation of shopkeepers could not be duped by the promise of moral co-operation.

* * *

Treasurer of the nation's wealth he was also the treasurer of the nation's honour. He was among the very few capitalists who recklessly threw themselves in the fray for the nation's freedom and bore the rigours of imprisonment every time the call was made. His faith burnt brightest when that of others flickered in times of stress and strain and dark despair. It was to revive the faith of others that when Gandhiji was in jail under a six years' term of imprisonment that he donated Rs. 2,50,000 and founded the Gandhi Seva Sangh. Politics he could understand, but he often regarded it as a sorry game which might soil one's heart and soul. And so he had early set his heart on the constructive part of the Congress programme: Khadi to which he gave his wealth, his time, his organising ability and his devotion; Harijan uplift for which he risked the wrath of his hide-bound community, threw open the first big temple in India to the Harijans, and gave to Gandhiji the whole of the income of the Harijan village — Sevagram — for the Harijans' welfare; Hindu-Muslim unity for which he cheerfully bore heavy blows in the course of a riot, and earnestness for which won him distinguished men like the Khan Sahebs as brothers and women like Raihanaben and the Captain Sisters as sisters; Village industries for which he gave away a precious part of his patrimony; Women's cause to which he devoted a good deal of his wealth and time; and the Cow to whose cause he dedicated his life.

* * *

Who could have been blessed with a richer life of service? And yet one could notice in various utterances of his a longing for something he had not yet achieved. His sense of truth and justice was keen even to harshness, so far at any rate as he was concerned. Before he met Gandhiji he had worshipped at many shrines. Gandhiji seemed to settle his mind, and Gandhiji's fierce passion for truth made him long to be his son. "Blessed will be the moment when I shall be worthy of being known as Mahatmaji's son," he wrote in 1923. "It is due to his infinite mercy that I have learnt at least to see my weaknesses and failings." He was often overwhelmed by a sense of his spiritual shortcomings, and he often longed to retire from all public activities. It was this spirit that endeared

him to Gandhiji more than the sacrifice of material possessions, almost incomparably great as this was. And that was what made him the proud recepient of two characteristic letters from Gandhiji written from jail. In one of these he wrote:

"As I proceed in my search for truth it grows upon me that Truth comprehends everything. It is not in ahimsa, but ahimsa is in it. What is perceived by a pure heart and intellect is truth for that moment. Cling to it, and it enables one to reach pure Truth. There is no question there of a divided duty. But often enough it is difficult to decide what is ahimsa. For instance, the use of disinfectants is himsa, and yet we cannot do without it. We have to live a life of ahimsa in the midst of a world of himsa, and that is possible only if we cling to truth. That is how I deduce ahimsa from truth. Out of truth emanate love, tenderness, humility. A votary of truth has to be humble as the dust. His humility increases with his observance of truth. I see this every moment of my life. I have a much vivider sense of truth and of my own littleness than I had a year ago. The wonderful implication of the great truth '*Brahma satyam jaganmithya*' (Brahman is real, all else unreal) grows on me from day to day. It teaches us patience. This will purge us of harshness and add to our tolerance. It will make us magnify the mole-hills of our errors into mountains, and minimise the mountains of others' errors into mole-hills. The body persists because of egoism. The utter extinction of the body of egoism is *moksha*. He who has achieved this will be the very image of Truth, or one may call it Brahman.

Therefore the loving name of God is *Dasanudas* (Servant of servants). Wife, children, friends, possessions — all should be held subservient to Truth. Each one of these should be sacrificed in the search for Truth. Only then can one be a satyagrahi. I have thrown myself into this movement with a view to making the observance of this principle comparatively easy, and it is with the same object that I do not hesitate to plunge men like you in it. Its outward form is Hind Swaraj. This Swaraj is being delayed because there is yet to be found a satyagrahi of that type. This, however, need not dismay us. It should spur us on to greater effort."

And another:

"Moksha is liberation from impure thought. Complete extinction of impure thought is impossible without ceaseless penance. There is only one way to achieve this. The moment an impure thought arises, confront it with a pure one. This is possible only with God's grace, and God's grace comes through ceaseless communion with Him and complete self-surrender. This communion may in the beginning be just a lip repetition of His name even disturbed by impure thoughts. But ultimately what is on the lips will possess the heart. And there is another thing to bear in mind. The mind may wander, but let not the senses wander with it. If the senses wander where the mind takes them, one is done for. But he who keeps control of the physical senses will some day be able to bring impure thoughts under control. . . . Impure thoughts need not dismay you. We are monarchs o the domain of Effort. God is sole Monarch of the domain of Result. . . . You know what to do to create a pure atmosphere about you. Spare diet, sight fixed on the earth below, and impatience with oneself to the extent of plucking the eye out if 'it offends thee'."

* * *

Nourished on food like this, he grew from self-introspection to more self-introspection. Constant companionship with Vinoba, who had managed the Satyagrahashram at Wardha since the beginning, was a great help in the process. He had immense self-confidence. He knew that, if some day the crown of thorns of Congress Presidentship were to be bestowed on him, he would be equal to the burden. But his heart quailed when he thought of the spiritual journey he had still to do before entering the Kingdom of Heaven. It was not because he had riches. Ownership in these he had cast away. But there were other things needed. And in order to purge himself of all dross he took the greatest step of his life — dedicating himself to the service of the cow. He left his house — the house which had lodged guests like Presidents of the Congress, Lord Lothian, H. E. Tai Chi Tao, Dr. John Mott, and the Egyptian Delegation — and went to live in a hut which he called *Gopuri*. Here he did his spinning, tended his cows with the devotion of King Dileepa, and kept a careful record of his thoughts and acts from day to day. As we visited the hut on the day he passed away we saw on the little desk in front of his feet his diary written up complete to the day of his death. Even so his life was complete and regular and God-fearing. He had dedicated this to Mother Cow, in order that she may be for him the *Kamadugha** that Cow Nandini had been to King Dileepa. Whether the death that came to him was the blessing given him by the Cow it is difficult to say. Perhaps it was. For no death could be more desirable. Almost until the last moment he was thinking of his Cow and his *Gopuri*, and when the end came it was so sudden and so quick that it seemed as though he had slipped into blissful peace. But whether the Cow had really proved his *Kamadugha*, there is no doubt that by his dedicated life he had rendered himself Gandhiji's *Kamadugha*. It was he who had made it possible for Gandhiji to settle first in Wardha and then in Sevagram, and it was he who was the living link between the outside world and Gandhiji. His death removes the link and leaves both Gandhiji and the outside world much poorer.

Sevagram, 16-2-42 **M. D.**

* Fulfiller of all desires.

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Manager

HARIJAN

Feb. 22 1942

PLEA FOR CALMNESS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged there have been reverses some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping-stones to success. Hence the saying peculiar to them that they blunder through to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralise them. They take them with calmness and in a sportsmanlike spirit. Wars are for them a national game like football. The defeated team heartily congratulates the successful one almost as if it was a joint victory, and drowns the sorrow of defeat in an exchange of glasses of whisky. If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes.

And is there the slightest cause for alarm? Certainly not for those who believe in non-violence. For fear and distrust of self are no part of their composition, nor are they part of a panoplied soldier. The attribute of non-violence is perhaps only a copy book maxim. We do not see it in actual practice in any measure. But this war is abundant proof that neither party though steeped in violence betrays any fear or distrust. I am filled with amazement and admiration at the reckless bravery displayed by combatants on either side. This war is a demonstration of the unthinkable nerve that human beings are capable of possessing. Looked at from either standpoint, therefore, we should be ashamed of fear, distrust and nervelessness in the face of danger. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every worker to steel himself against cowardly panic and prevent its spread as far as he can. "Cowards die many times before their death." Let this not be proved of us.

The true danger exists only for cities. It may be very near due to the fall of Singapore and probable loss of Burma. One of the best precautions consists in those people who are not wanted in the cities or those who want to shun danger, migrating to the villages in an orderly manner. There should be no panicky rush. Those who must remain in the cities whether for business or otherwise should carry out instructions that may be issued by the authorities from time to time. Those who will not, for any reason whatsoever, should clear out in good time. If this simple precaution is taken, we may face the future without perturbation. More I cannot say, for we are a house divided against itself and there is no living bond between the rulers and the ruled. It is tragic but it is true. The tragedy is deepened by the knowledge that all parties feel so helpless.

On the train to Calcutta, 17-2-42

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Eternal Problem

Q. Why can't you see that whilst there is possession it must be defended against all odds? Therefore your insistence that violence should be eschewed in all circumstances is utterly unworkable and absurd. I think non-violence is possible only for select individuals.

A. This question has been answered often enough in some form or other in these columns as also in those of *Young India*. But it is an evergreen. I must answer it as often as it is put, especially when it comes from an earnest seeker as this one does. I claim that even now, though the social structure is not based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, all the world over mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance of one another. If they had not done so, only the fewest and the most ferocious would have survived. But such is not the case. Families are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so-called civilised society called nations. Only they do not recognise the supremacy of the law of non-violence. It follows, therefore, that they have not investigated its vast possibilities. Hitherto out of sheer inertia, shall I say, we have taken it for granted that complete non-violence is possible only for the few who take the vow of non-possession and the allied abstinences. Whilst it is true that the votaries alone can carry on research work and declare from time to time the new possibilities of the great eternal law governing man, if it is the law, it must hold good for all. The many failures we see are not of the law but of the followers, many of whom do not even know that they are under that law willynilly. When a mother dies for her child she unknowingly obeys the law. I have been pleading for the past fifty years for a conscious acceptance of the law and its zealous practice even in the face of failures. Fifty years' work has shown marvellous results and strengthened my faith. I do claim that by constant practice we shall come to a state of things when lawful possession will command universal and voluntary respect. No doubt such possession will not be tainted. It will not be an insolent demonstration of the inequalities that surround us everywhere. Nor need the problem of unjust and unlawful possessions appal the votary of non-violence. He has at his disposal the non-violent weapon of satyagraha and non-cooperation which hitherto has been found to be a complete substitute of violence whenever it has been applied honestly in sufficient measure. I have never claimed to present the complete science of non-violence. It does not lend itself to such treatment. So far as I know no single physical science does, not even the very precise science of mathematics. I am but a seeker, and I have fellow seekers like the questioner whom I invite to accompany me in the very difficult but equally fascinating search.

Sevagram, 9-2-42

NOT NECESSARILY IMPURE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Thus writes Shri Shankerrao Dev:

"In the last issue of *Harijan*, in your article 'A Deplorable Incident' you say to the rich: 'Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society.' When I read this, the first question that arose in my mind was: 'Why first earn crores and then use them for society? As society today is constituted the means of earning crores are bound to be impure; and one who earns crores by impure means cannot be expected to follow the *mantram* तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा: ; because in the very process of earning crores by impure means the man's character is bound to be tainted or vitiated. And moreover you have always been emphasising the purity of means. But I am afraid that there is a possibility of people misunderstanding that you are laying an emphasis here more on the ends than on the means.

I request you to emphasise as much, if not more, the purity of means of earning money as on spending. If purity of means is strictly observed, then, according to me, crores could not be accumulated at all and the difficulty of spending for society will assume a very minor prospect."

I must demur. Surely a man may conceivably make crores through strictly pure means, assuming that a man may legitimately possess riches. For the purpose of my argument, I have assumed that private possession itself is not held to be impure. If I own a mining lease and I tumble upon a diamond of rare value, I may suddenly find myself a millionaire without being held guilty of having used impure means. This actually happened when Cullinan diamond, much more valuable than the Kohinoor, was found. Such instances can be easily multiplied. My argument was surely addressed to such men. I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men and for that matter most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response. Is it not conducive to the well-being of society that every member uses all his talents, only not for personal aggrandisement but for the good of all? We do not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent. Such a society must ultimately perish. I therefore suggest that my advice that monied men may earn their crores (honestly only, of course) but so as to dedicate them to the service of all is perfectly sound. तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा: is a *mantra* based on uncommon knowledge. It is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit in the place of the present one where each one lives for himself without regard to what happens to his neighbour.

Sevagram, 8-2-42

NOT QUITE

(By K. G. Mashruwala)

"A pedagogue and psychiatrist" sends a short essay on 'The problem of violence' in which *inter alia* he says:

"Non-violence is not a negation of anything. It is a positive assertion of moral courage to take risks for resisting forces of evil. It is developed by an irresistible will for self-purification......

The cure of violence consists in adopting an attitude of sympathetic indifference to its struggles and benevolent neutrality in its conflicts. Believers in non-violence should resort ro a policy of non-participation and non-opposition to its attempts. It should be allowed to relax and be benefited by the punishment of its actions as it fails to profit by appeals of reason, fair play and justice......

The whole life of violence is patterned on the Telugu proverb, *Maku arogyam, maku ayushyam, maku dhanam, miku rinam* (To *us* health, to *us* life, to *us* wealth, to *you* obligations)."

The conception of non-violence as expressed in the second paragraph of the correspondent's letter is not altogether correct. On closer examination it will be seen that it takes away a good deal of what is stated in the first paragraph. Non-violence would not justify itself fully, if it satisfied itself simply by "adopting an attitude of sympathetic indifference" and "benevolent neutrality" towards violence and resorting to a policy of "non-opposition to its attempts", and allowing it "to relax and be benefited by the punishment of its actions".

The fact that in the present war it is not possible to go beyond this attitude should not be taken to mean that non-violence has evolved and worked itself out to its fullest extent. It is the result of the unpreparedness of pacifists, who are yet no more than children in the kindergarten of non-violence.

If non-violence is a truly effective force, it should develop sufficient strength to intervene in violent conflicts in a very effective manner, and bring about a peaceful solution of the points of dispute *before* and not *after* the belligerents are exhausted and 'punished' by their own actions. It will have been no virtue of non-violence, if there is peace as a result of total destruction.

Extinguishing agents can take no credit, when a fire is extinguished because there is no more of inflammable material left for it to burn.

I have often heard it said that this total war itself is going to pave the way for a non-violent order. This is quite possible. But the compulsory adoption of a non-violent civilisation will not necessarily bring contentment and happiness to the world. Violence asleep is no more non-violence than the peace of 1918 was an end of war. Peace and non-violent order that will contribute to man's progress and happiness must result from the true awakening of the nations to an appreciation of non-violence and not from a state of coma after the war.

Sevagram, 18-1-42

PASSING OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE A. I. V. I. A.

(*By J. C. Kumarappa*)

The A. I. V. I. A. has just passed its first seven years and has entered the second and therefore more responsible stage. Thanks to our education most of us sophisticated ones are strangers to village industries and village conditions. We learn Western capitalistic economics and shout for "facts and figures", without knowing how to read them. We are strangers in our own land. It is this phenomenon that has necessitated the A. I. V. I. A. having to pass through this early stage. In these seven years we have cultivated a nodding acquaintance with a few village industries, have begun to recognise the rudiments of village economics, carried on a few experiments in the processes, and attempted a reorganisation of some industries.

Necessarily during this period the Association worked within a restricted area in a highly centralised manner. We now pass to the second stage. We find the country is awaiting a well-formulated constructive programme. In order to facilitate the spreading of the work of the Association we have to decentralise its work. To this end a new constitution has been framed so as to provide for provincial organisations working under Sanchalaks and Secretaries. Gandhiji himself has assumed the helm as President of the Association to steer it through the uncharted course before us in the immediate future, and the following members form the new Board of Management :

1. Shri Laxmidas P. Asar, 2. Shri Shankerlal Banker, 3. Smt. Goshiben Captain, 4. Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, 5. Shri Profulla Chandra Ghosh, 6. Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju, 7. Shri Bharatan Kumarappa, 8. Shri J. C. Kumarappa (Secretary), 9. Shri Vaikunthrai L. Mehta, 10. Shri Dhiren Mazumdar, 11. Shri Shoorji Vallabhdas.

The provincial organisations will develop their own methods of carrying out the policy laid down by the Board. They may have a central institution, like Maganwadi, in a convenient rural setting where teaching and training of workers will go on side by side with the practical working of some industries chosen from the promising industries of the province. They will carry on propaganda to popularise the products of village industries and educate the people in the underlying philosophy of this movement. This war has helped to demonstrate to us, more clearly than ever, that our salvation lies in the strength of our village organisations. The seed of destruction innate in centralised organisations has sprouted with a vengeance, dispersing the overcrowded population of the cities, threatened by the avarice of invaders, back to the safety of their villages.

The Board met early this month and has framed rules to govern affiliation of allied institutions, recognition of producing centres, and certification of dealers in village products.

In view of the fact that most of the village tanned leather is from non-slaughtered animals, it decided to give the support of the Association to the village tanning industry by confining sales of leather goods at shops certified by the Association to those made out of hide of non-slaughtered buffaloes, cows and bullocks.

We hope that in the next few years, with the unstinted co-operation of those who have a living faith in this non-violent foundation of economic structure of human activities, the country will be studded with A. I. V. I. A. centres radiating hope to the desperate, bringing food to the hungry and happiness to all.

[One would have thought that I had enough on my hands without taking the additional burden of the Presidentship of the A. I. V. I. A. I have been its guide ever since its inception, but the importunity of the Board was irresistible. Readers will lighten my task by sharing it with me by (a) becoming members, (b) contributing funds, (c) contributing solid work.

Sevagram, 9-2-42 **M. K. G.**]

Three Essentials

Assuming the presence of the will among the millions, rapid spread of hand-spinning is possible only by the adoption of the following three things :

1. Use of unginned cotton from the nearest spot when it is not grown on one's own plot.

2. Ginning it on a polished board with an iron or smooth wooden rod and carding the cotton by manipulation of the cotton with fingers assisted by a wooden knife made on the spot. This process is called *tunai* (तुनाई).

3. Spinning the slivers on the dhanush takli.

Hand gins cannot be manufactured to order today. All available unginned cotton should be prepared first by the method explained in 2 above.

Where unginned cotton is not available ginned cotton from factories has got to be used. It too lends itself to *tunai*, though much more time is required for carding by the *tunai* process when bale cotton has to be used. Where a carding bow is available, naturally it will be used. But what is true of ginning is equally true of carding. It is not possible to manufacture bows and gut in a moment. *Tunai* is a method devised and being perfected by Shri Vinoba with an artist's skill and ardour.

When spinning spreads among the millions it will be impossible to supply slivers from a centre or centres. The utmost that is possible is for families or groups to set apart one or two hands per a fixed number for carding. The ideal, the best, and in the long run the quickest, way is for each one to prepare his own slivers. It makes spinning more interesting, and the variety of occupation breaks the monotony.

I suggest that, though the crisis is not yet felt and the mills are working, khadi workers will do well from now to adopt the suggestions I have made. When the crisis does come, we shall then be found ready.

Sevagram, 2-2-42 **M. K. G.**

GOSEVA SANGH RESOLUTIONS

(Passed at the Conference recently held at Wardha)

1. Whereas India is primarily an agricultural country, 80 per cent of its people being dependent on agriculture, and whereas Indian agriculture depends on bullocks, and whereas the cow is not only the milk-and-ghee-giver but also the sole means of providing bullocks, this Conference is definitely of opinion that the improvement of the present condition and economic status of the cow and her progeny is more important than that of other cattle and indispensable in any scheme of economic planning on a national basis.

2. Whereas to underfeed animals, to keep them in an insanitary condition, to overload them, to take more work from them than they can give, to beat them, to torture them with spikes, and the cruel 'phooka' is wholly against humanitarian principles, and whereas such practices decrease the utility of the animals, this Conference appeals to the general public and in a special way to the members of the Goseva Sangh and other cow lovers to arouse the public conscience and make the utmost effort to put a stop to such inhuman treatment and where necessary to seek the assistance of the law.

3. Whereas the real object of *pinjrapols* and charitable *goshalas* is to give asylum to diseased, old and disabled cattle and save them from pain and slaughter, this Conference is of opinion that in order effectively to achieve the object the following reforms in their management and programme of work are essential:

(a) Every institution should provide proper maintenance and veterinary and other scientific facilities for cattle. These facilities should also be made available to the neighbouring public.

(b) It should be the duty of the institution to see to it that scrub animals are not allowed to procreate. It should be incumbent on the management to arrange for proper feeding and care of well-bred cows as also for improvement in the breed of cattle with a view to producing cows who will yield more milk and bullocks capable of doing more work.

(c) Every institution should keep good bulls whose services should be available to the general public also.

(d) Every institution should, as far as possible, make provision for spacious dry cattle farms where the dry cows and calves of the neighbouring public may be kept at concession rates. Good bulls should alse be kept.

(e) Every institution should make arrangements for producing green grass and fodder in ample measure and for preserving the same by means of silage etc.

(f) The buildings of *pinjrapols* should be constructed so as to ensure cleanliness and healthy living. Wells, water troughs, etc. should be scientifically planned on a uniform model.

(g) There should be an expert in animal husbandry in charge of each institution. He should have thorough knowledge of cattle farming, fodder cultivation and veterinary science.

4. Whereas it is desirable that all those institutions which accept the Conference resolution regarding *pinjrapols* should be conducted on uniform lines and efficiently managed, the Conference recommends to them to obtain certificates from and affiliate themselves with the Goseva Sangh.

The Conference recommends to the Goseva Sangh to frame the necessary rules in order to facilitate certification and affiliation of institutions, and to invite existing *pinjrapols* and *goshalas* to get themselves affiliated to the Sangh.

FOUR YEARS' WORK

I

The Basic Scheme of Education as propounded by Gandhiji over four years ago has met and continues to meet with a storm of opposition from certain quarters. It is in the nature of things that anything so wholly revolutionary should be opposed by those who have been nurtured on certain traditions. Most people admit that the present system of education has not been of the type suited to our conditions of life or in keeping with our rich heritage of culture, all deplore the fact that the vast majority in this land are wholly illiterate and uneducated, and yet because of political differences any scheme emanating from however pure a motive is apt to create prejudices in the minds of those belonging to a different school of political thought and therefore does not always get a fair trial. The Wardha scheme has had to battle against such odds. Inasmuch as compulsory primary education has always been declared impossible because of lack of funds, Gandhiji claimed that his scheme, apart from its own intrinsic value of method, had the additional qualification of becoming self-supporting up to a point and after a certain stage if the State would make provision for the sale of the articles produced in the schools. He still adheres to this claim, but nowhere did he even say that the schools would be self-supporting straightaway. It stands to reason that in all craft schools there must be an initial cost of equipment. Spinning was chosen in the first instance as the craft pre-eminently suitable for children of all ages and for village children in particular. It is the one craft about which, thanks to him, there is expert knowledge in our country. The main objections, however, to the scheme are that after a couple of years or in some cases only after a year the schools are not self-supporting and that spinning has not proved a suitable craft. There is nothing in the Zakir Husain Report to show that the sponsors of the scheme wanted spinning to be the only craft. But experts and text-books are lacking and cannot be produced in a day. Moreover the lack of trained teachers in an entirely new type of education cannot be made good in a short time either. All these handicaps the Talimi Sangh has had to face. In addition, Congress popular Governments, who were out to give the scheme as fair a trial as possible, went out of office, and hence in certain provinces the scheme suffered. Notwithstanding all these difficulties the third annual report of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh just published makes interesting reading and should be studied with an impartial mind.

Basic Schools

The Governments of the C. P. and Berar, Bihar, U. P., and Orissa started a certain number of schools and training schools as an official experiment.

So have done the States of Kashmir and Rajgarh. In addition there are some non-government agencies who have taken up the scheme, such as the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi, The Rashtriya Gramshala at Thamna, Kheda Dt. Gujarat, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, Poona, the Gurukul at Kangri, the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya at Periyanayakanpalayam, Coimbatore District, the Friends' Settlement at Hoshangabad, and the Vijay Vidyamandir of Avidha (Rajpipla State). The District Council of Raipur (C. P.) has had its teachers trained at the Vidyamandir training schools and has introduced the basic syllabus in 15 of its schools.

Progress

Naturally progress of the experiment varies from province to province and from institution to institution according to the interpretation of the fundamental principles of the scheme and the faith and efficiency of the teachers. But the various reports give one ample hope that, given the right type of workers, the experiment will fulfil its original expectations.

The Bihar Government, through its Board of Basic Education composed of officials and non-official educationists, was the only Government to make a careful assessment of the result of the experiment in its province, and the Sangh has published their report in the form of a booklet. Conferences and exhibitions, of which two have been held in Poona and Delhi, have been another means of finding out what progress is being made. The Delhi Conference among its various findings recorded "with satisfaction that the reports on the working of basic schools run by the Government, local bodies and by private enterprise are almost unanimous that general standards of health and behaviour as well as intellectual attainment are very encouraging. The children in basic schools are more active, cheerful, self-reliant, their power of self-expression is well developed, they are acquiring habits of co-operative work, and social prejudices are breaking down." The following from the report of the Board of Inspectors in Bihar bears quotation: "Champaran was specially selected as the first field of experiment as one of the most backward areas in the province. At the time of the introduction of basic education there were only five primary schools and one middle school in the entire area. . . . Everything in the home and life of the child tends to hinder the growth of children. . . . We had not only to examine whether the required habits of body and mind and the proper spirit were being acquired by the children, but also to find out how far the same could be attributed to the use of the media to which basic education attached importance." They then give their findings in detail. In regard to skill and efficiency in the craft the children had attained a fair measure of success, there being a marked improvement over the previous year. In regard to discipline too there seemed to be distinct progress not only in the class room but also in the playing field and in meetings and gatherings. There was an absence of noise and scramble for places, jostling and pushing, which are always present in children's gatherings. Development of intelligence had been achieved to an appreciable extent. "Considering the backwardness of the area the results obtained were really very encouraging." Lethargy and listlessness were being gradually overcome, and children were finding pleasure in good work for its own sake. The progress in the development of habits of systematic and thorough work was not up to the required standard, nor had the children developed enough of the spirit of inquiry and power of observation. They were, however, becoming aware of their social environment, and there was noticeable progress in co-operation and service. Personal cleanliness, a sense of orderliness, self-expression had definitely developed, and there was a definite development in the whole personality of the child.

Kashmir reports that the mental content of the pupils has been considerably enriched under the basic syllabus. Teachers are looked upon as friends. The children are definitely neater, tidier, smarter, and show signs of an awakened sense of responsibility. The average attendance has shown a marked upward tendency, the children show a fairly good sense of colour harmony in their picture sketches, they take a delight in flowers and pet animals, and are keenly inquisitive, always eager to know the why, how and wherefore of the things and persons surrounding them, they take a keen interest in decorating their class rooms and the school museum, they have their own garden, they thoroughly enjoy monthly excursions, they edit their daily news bulletins themselves, they run a stationery shop and a savings bank of their own, the cleanliness of the class rooms is their own responsibility, they help in the village and in their homes in sweeping and scavenging, they have even repaired roads and dug drains.

The C. P. Government admits that children working under this syllabus are more alert, well-behaved, cleaner and more systematic in work than those in ordinary schools.

The Bombay Special Officer of Basic Education says their boys have been making steady progress in mental and physical development. A sense of service has been generated, and children are more attentive, accurate and frugal in habits.

The Vijay Vidyamandir in Rajpipla State notes a great change in the attitude of the children. They are cleaner and more keen on their studies, more alert and quick. They are slowly becoming self-supporting.

Sevagram, 22-1-42 **A. K.**

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FIERY ORDEAL

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Twentytwo years ago a young man with the bloom of thirty springs upon him came to me and said, " I want to ask something of you."

" Ask, and it shall be given, if it is at all within my power to give," I replied with some surprise.

" Regard me as your son Devadas," the young man said.

" Agreed," I replied. " Only I am giving nothing, you are the giver."

The young man was no other than Jamnalal Bajaj. People know something of what this sacrament meant. But few know the extent of the part played by the self-adopted son. Never before, I can say, was a mortal blessed with a ' son ' like him. Of course I have many sons and daughters in the sense that they have done some of my work. But Jamnalalji surrendered himself and his without reservation. There is hardly any activity of mine in which I did not receive his full-hearted co-operation and in which it did not prove to be of the greatest value. He was gifted with a quick intelligence. He was a merchant prince. He placed at my disposal his ample possessions. He became guardian of my time and my health. And he did it all for the public good. The day he died he and Jankidevi were to come to me. But he died almost at the very hour he should have been with me. Never before have I felt so forlorn except when Maganlal was snatched from me fourteen years ago. But I had no doubt then, as I have none now, that a calamity of that kind is a blessing in disguise. God wants to try me through and through. I live in the faith that He will give me the strength too to pass through the ordeal.

Sevagram, 16-2-42

(Adapted from *Harijansevak*)

Notes

Mean and Vindictive

Owing to my preoccupations due to the untimely death of Jamnalalji I have not been able to attend to even important matters. I have just learnt of the arrests of Shri Hare Krushna Mahtab, a staunch believer in non-violence, and other workers. Shri Mahtab wanted to be bailed out. But the application has been rejected. I hope the matter will be taken to the High Court. It is preposterous that bail should be refused in such cases. I have learnt further that the Orissa Ministry has effected these arrests in order to prevent a motion of no confidence being carried at the forthcoming meeting of the Orissa Legislature. If this is true, the action is mean and vindictive. Let us hope that the members of the Orissa Assembly will have the courage and gentlemanliness to support the motion of no confidence irrespective of party bias.

On the train to Calcutta, 17-2-42

Oasis in a Desert

In the midst of the desert of adverse but ill-thought criticism of Government officials of basic education it is refreshing to find the following appreciation of the basic schools of Bihar from the pen of Mr. E. R. J. R. Cousins, Adviser to H. E. the Governor of Bihar, received by Shri Aryanayakam, Secretary of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh:

"I am sorry that my programme for the inspection of the basic schools was interfered with by heavy rain and had to be curtailed. But I was able to meet the teachers and pupils of 18 out of the 27 schools, 6 at Brindaban-Rampurva and 12 at Chaubetola-Parukia, and I was extremely interested in all that I saw. We shall not of course be able to judge the experiment fully until the completion of all seven grades, but I was impressed with the cleanliness, intelligence and obvious pleasure of the pupils in their work, and I am confident that we are proceeding on the right lines, and that children of 14 who have gone through the entire basic curriculum will not fail in comparison with those who have gone through the ordinary school course up to the same age.

A particular encouraging feature, and one upon which I place the greatest emphasis, is that the schools have undoubtedly succeeded in capturing the goodwill and interest of the village people, and as long as this can be retained it is impossible for the system to fail of being a success. The public spirit displayed by the proprietors and the villagers of Chaubetola-Parukia in providing such excellent playgrounds for the school, in preparing roads and equipping the scouts troop, which is one of the largest I have ever seen, and above all in insisting that the village boys shall attend the school regularly is most commendable, and I am assured that similar proofs of public interest are exhibited in connection with other schools which I was not able to see. I feel confident that the efforts of the villagers will be well repaid, and that in addition to education in the ordinary sense the village boys of the future will acquire at the schools such attributes of mental alertness, manual dexterity, health and cleanliness as will make the villagers in future more healthy, attractive and enlightened places than they have been in the past."

Sevagram, 16-2-42

Eyes to the Blind

Though I had heard a lot about the reputation of Dr. Mathuradas of Moga, I had never had occasion to witness any of his famous operations for cataract, until I saw them in Wardha last month. He came specially at the invitation of Jamnalalji, and with his assistants restored eyes to about three hundred people who had been blinded by cataract.

These mass operations have been described as a *yajna* (sacrifice). And *yajna* it certainly is, as any act of selfless service is a sacrifice. This *yajna* began some years ago in the Bhagavad Bhakti Ashram at Rewari, with which Jamnalalji was closely connected. He therefore invited the doctor this time to Wardha. I bowed to Dr. Mathuradas in admiration for his unerring and quick surgical hand. He performed operations at the rate of one in a minute, there was scarcely a mishap. Thousands thus get back their eyes free, as he charges no fee to the poor.

The doctor told me that nowhere except in India was cataract so common as was also rhino-

plasty. These operations, therefore, place him in the forefront of the surgeons for cataract throughout the world. No doubt many doctors have now taken up the work and copy his example. It is just as it should be, for the medical profession should be one of selfless service. And there was no humanitarian mission for which Jamnalalji was not ready. It came to him as naturally as any of his business enterprises. That was why he had a scheme in hand for making these operations a periodical feature in C. P.

I hope that the scheme will not be interrupted by his death, and Dr. Mathuradas is always ready for these *yajnas*.

On the train to Calcutta, 17-2-42

(From *Harijansevak*)

Limbdi Exodus Anniversary

The Limbdi exodus has entered upon its fourth year. The *Hijratis* who took part in it deserve congratulations. Some have dropped out, out of weakness, as happens in all movements. Not all that are born into this world live. Quite a lot die at birth. Many survive their childhood. Only a few cover the full span of life. Even so it is with human endeavour. Many rally to the call, but only a few persevere till the end. But those who do, vindicate the sacrifice of those who have dropped by the wayside, and serve as beacon-lights to subsequent generations. The *Hijratis* must be prepared to prove their mettle in the final heat. Success will be theirs, only if they show themselves to be capable of making full sacrifice for the cause which they hold dear and to which they have dedicated themselves.

Sevagram, 15-2-42 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

M. K. G.

'Nai Talim'

With its January number *Nai Talim*, the organ of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, entered on its fourth year of life. It began publication six months after the Talimi Sangh came into being and the experiment in basic education commenced. Workers were few; the road before the pioneers was beset with thorns. *Nai Talim* was started in order to help those who had dedicated their lives in this endeavour. The experiment in basic education is a revolutionary one. It is only by pooling experiences and recording failures no less than successes that we can hope to achieve our goal. Those engaged in the work must continue to help in making *Nai Talim* the source of information and guidance that is its role.

The office is being shifted to Patna. Acharya Badrinath, who has played an important part in making the experiment in Bihar a success, will now share the burden of editorship with Shrimati Ashadevi. The fact that there is a basic training centre in Patna and several basic schools in Champaran district should help *Nai Talim* to be in the closest touch with this new experiment.

While the organ is meant primarily to serve those engaged in teaching and promoting basic education, the Hindi and Urdu reading public will benefit themselves if they subscribe to this monthly. After all the aim of basic education is to make useful and good citizens of our children. The scheme should, therefore, arouse the interest of all who are keen on bringing in a system which claims to bring light and life where so far there has been darkness and deadness.

The subscription is Rs. 1/4 per annum including postage, and the monthly can be had from the Talimi Sangh Office, Sevagram. There is an Urdu edition also published from the Jamia Millia, Delhi.

Sevagram, 21-1-42 **A. K.**

HELL IN AJMER

(*By Rameshwari Nehru*)

During our recent wanderings Thakkar Bapa and I had the opportunity of going round the Harijan bastis in Ajmer City. As was expected by us we had almost to wade through pools of filth in the Mehtars' localities. The lanes seemed never to have even cultivated an acquaintance with the broom. Open drains fouled the whole atmosphere, and these were the habitations of the very people who kept the whole city clean!

But the most painful sight was the night-soil reservoir of the city, unmentionably dirty but situated close to many sweepers' and other houses. Six years ago I saw it, though, in spite of my efforts, I could not stop there to watch its working. But its memory had stayed with me like a nightmare. I had tried then to get the public of Ajmer as well as others interested in it. The matter was also brought to the notice of the authorities of the Municipality. But evidently to no effect.

Learning that this reservoir was still in the same old condition, Thakkar Bapa and I went to see it, though once again I found it impossible to stand there for long. Thakkar Bapa, of course, courageously and carefully went round the whole place and said with a simplicity, characteristic of him, that he could swear in a court of law that nowhere else in India did such a bad system of night-soil disposal exist. And Thakkar Bapa knows almost every Harijan basti in our country!

The reservoir consists of two rectangular tanks, about 100'×20'×10' each, which are used alternately. The night-soil mixed up with sewage water is shovelled into one of the tanks from a platform above, from a distance, thus exposing to view all the dirt. A Mehtar has to shovel the matter into the tank with something like a scraper attached to a long pole while his feet are immersed in the semi-liquid filth. The tanks are open, and the foul smell from the night-soil of a whole city of one and a quarter lakhs of population can better be imagined than described.

The most painful and inhuman part of the whole business is that about half a dozen Mehtars have every day to get right down into the tank in the midst of all the filth it contains, in order to see that the outlet from the tank is not choked with solid material. They have to wade through liquid filth, 1 to 2 ft. deep. While doing so it is difficult for them to save even their hands and other parts of the body from getting soiled. From the tank the liquid is taken out in an open channel, 2 miles

long, and then utilised as manure. The whole thing is a revolting sight and a standing disgrace to civilised society.

We approached the President of the Municipal Committee and impressed on him the need to cover these tanks, to arrange for the shifting of night-soil straight from the cart to the tank through man-holes, and to provide sanitary implements for the Mehtars to do the work so that they may not be forced to touch the filth with their hands or feet. The present arrangement is inhuman and must be replaced by more scientific and sanitary arrangements. It is the least that can be expected from the Municipality. The President gave us an assurance that our suggestions would be accepted by the Committee. We anxiously await the results.

Sojat, 1-2-42

MODEL SCHOOLS FOR HARIJANS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Seth Ghanashyamdas Birla, President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, writes:

"We are thinking of establishing a few residential schools mainly for educating Harijan boys, though not exclusively. So far, whenever we have talked of Harijan hostels or schools, we have thereby meant cheap schools or cheap hostels conducted by ill-educated and ill-paid teachers and wardens with boys half-starved. So long as we educate Harijans or children of poor parents in these cheap institutions, the boys will never succeed in shedding the inferiority complex from which they often suffer. And what will they learn from these unqualified and ill-paid teachers? These boys never get the opportunity to mix with the other boys. The harm due to this lack of contact between the poor and the well-to-do or between Harijans and Savarnas is mutual. I therefore propose that we should have a few residential schools established in pleasing environment. They should be of a standard that would compare favourably in every respect with a well-conducted public school. We should start a few such schools first of all as a trial.

They should be of the matriculation standard and affiliated to a university. They should, of course, be mostly residential. Personal attention to students should be a speciality. Education should be imparted through the medium of the mother-tongue. English should be taught as a second language. During the period of this education, the boys should be taught useful handicrafts chosen for their educative value.

In order to make this education thorough and self-sufficient, we should take two years more than the time needed for the matriculation examination. These two years should be utilised in giving extra training to the boys besides what they learn for the matriculation course.

We propose to have three crafts, one of which will be taken up by every boy at his option. These will be:

Either (1) Carding, Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing and Bleaching; or (2) Carpentry and Smithy; or (3) Paper-making, Book-binding, and Ordinary Composing.

It is intended to employ a superior staff, adequately paid, to ensure good qualifications. The underlying idea is that the boys may not feel the want of a college education. There will be no bar to such. The boys, it is hoped, will not find it difficult to earn an honest livelihood after finishing the course. It will be the duty of the Board to accommodate such boys as may like to be.

Besides the university course and craft, special attention will be given to increasing their general knowledge and hygiene. Music, games, exercises, riding, swimmiing, etc. should be taught. Religious or moral training should not be neglected. Equal respect for all religions should be inculcated, along with a good grounding in the principles of Hinduism and the peculiar beauties of our own culture.

Half the number of the students should be Harijans whc would have free education and free boarding and lodging. The other half of the students, i. e. Savarnas, should be charged fees.

This is a very rough and brief outline of my idea of a good high school.

But there is difference amongst us about this outline. Some say: Why should we have the matriculation course? Others say: We should not undertake costly education as this will be a bad example to set. It is argued that we may employ most qualified men, but only if they come on a bare maintenance and out of a spirit of sacrifice. In other words, in their opinion, in this school there would be no room for teachers other than those prepared to lead a simple life of sacrifice. Some go to the extent of saying that we should rather have no school than start one which is not manned by a highly self-sacrificing staff.

I consider all this unpractical. I need not give my arguments. They are obvious.

Will you express your views on this question?"

I whole-heartedly support Seth Ghanashyamdas's scheme. The arguments advanced in opposition seem to be based more on caution than on principle. I too should side with the opposition, if the scheme was to be financed out of the meagre funds of the Harijan Board. But I assume that the model schools would be financed by special donations enough to guarantee their full working. Having lived in South Africa for twenty years where every Indian is treated almost as a pariah, I know how sensitive the mind becomes under unnatural treatment. I took some time to regain my balance though I never lost the sensitiveness. I felt that I was a strange creature in the company of the general body of Europeans. The plight of Harijans in India is much worse because of their much greater ignorance and still greater poverty. Therefore, if we are to break down the double complex, we have to bring up a fair number of Harijan lads in surroundings in no way inferior to those that are available to the well-to-do class boys. The scheme under examination does not contemplate the production of clerks who would be too big for their boots and who would be naturally discontented because no one would have them as clerks. Boys trained under the scheme would be in no way inferior in knowledge to the other matriculates. But these will be better placed because their bodies will be specially looked after and their hands will have their cunning fully developed. Such boys

will have their future assured. They will have self-confidence. They will not be torn from their kith and kin; on the contrary, they will be expected to serve fellow Harijans and give them benefit of the teaching they have received.

It may be objected that I am inconsistent in that I have written and spoken against the present system of education. The objection would be superficial. In the first place, the worst features of the system will be eliminated in that the training will be in the mother-tongue and the boys will be taught handicrafts which should enable them to earn an independent and decent living. Secondly, an objection that may be applicable to boys who can be better educated cannot be held good in the case of boys who have no choice and who smart under the knowledge that they cannot have the education that thousands of boys have simply because they are not Harijans. I would not insult Harijan lads by arguing with them that what the thousands of non-Harijan lads are doing is wrong, and that therefore they had better be satisfied with the shanties which Seth Ghanashyamdas has referred to in his letter.

I plump for his scheme. I wish him all success. The sooner it is launched, the better for Harijans and better for India. These schools will be potent instruments for exorcising the demon of untouchability.

Sevagram, 16-2-42

FROM THE OLDEST CONGRESSMAN

Dear Mahatmaji,

I congratulate you upon your dissociation with the believers of violence as far as possible. God gave you an opportunity to do so at Poona, but at Bombay you forgot all about that God-given opportunity. At Bardoli God gave you that opportunity again. I am exceedingly glad that you did not make the same mistake at Wardha as you had done at Bombay. God never forsakes him whose surrender to Him is complete.

Life of everything other than the Eternal is limited by the laws of Nature. Violence was created by God who gave it a limited life. God in His infinite wisdom now finds that violence was given a trial and found wanting in preserving world peace. How and for what purpose armament was created is not known, but it is now certain that armament at the present time is used by violence for indiscriminate man-slaughter throughout the world, and the inevitable result is annihilation of mankind and a deluge of blood all over the world. This is threatening the whole world with wholesale extermination of mankind. The only reassuring circumstance is that Nature gave both violence and armament only limited life to live, and it is high time that they should quit the world. All that violence and armament did during their tenure of life was war and nothing but war. Now the world war is complete, and violence and armament are exhausting themselves to be entirely finished. This world war may not be the longest but it must be the last, and a new world with perfect peace and tranquillity will emerge out of the ashes of violence and armament for the benefit of mankind.

The outgoing world is almost entirely enveloped by a cloud of disbelief in God. A considerable number of the disbelievers not only deny the very existence of God but they assert that belief in God is a moral weakness, if not delinquency and a bar to human progress. The rest of the disbelievers think that God is more dead than alive, and that they are the masters of all they survey. The total number of these disbelievers is the largest, and they are responsible for the world war. Then come the waverers who entertain the idea of God differently in accordance with their different temperaments. The pictures of God that they draw up in their minds are accordingly different. But those waverers agree in forgetting that God is more living than they suppose Him to be. To them the words 'Omnipresent', 'Omniscient' and 'Omnipotent' are for the expression of lip-loyalty to God and not for the enlightenment of their minds about Him.

God-believing India will not have man-given violence and armament-controlled freedom for exploiting the weaker section of humanity. She must have God-given freedom for their service — *seva*.

God-given freedom can be obtained only by satyagraha, sufferings for which can be successfully undertaken only by those whose surrender to Him is complete. The number of satyagrahis is steadily increasing. Let the advocates of violence say and do whatever they may, the number of believers in non-violence will steadily go on increasing and the world will have real peace.

Chandpur, 24-1-42 **Hara Dayal Nag**

[Though the foregoing has an intrinsic value as an expression of robust faith, it is printed as being from the pen of the oldest living Congressman who clings to non-violence as an infant to its mother's breast.

Sevagram, 9-2-42 **M. K. G.**]

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